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Atari Online News, Etc.
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->From the Editor's Keyboard
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"Saying it like it is!"

Well, with the official end of summer arriving this week, cooler, Fall-like weather has also arrived. Not that I'm complaining; I prefer cooler temperatures. Maybe I can take down the air conditioners and pack them away until next year - and save some money on electricity!

Not much news happening this week, unless you want to discuss the Pope's ongoing visit to the U.S. Personally, I figure that there's plenty of coverage everywhere. And, I'm not a Catholic, so other than a historical event, it's really not a big deal for me personally.

So, let's move right into this week's issue, shall we!

Until next time...

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FireBee News Update

by Fred Horvat

Something I want to do on the FireBee is to add Unix like capability to MiNT. Mostly for me what I would be after is to have a BASH (Unix Shell or Command Line) be able to run some useful commands like PING, IFCONFIG, TOP, etc. I can add BASH and some of the commands I am looking for from here <http://vincent.riviere.free.fr/soft/m68k-atari-mint/archives/mint/> Currently I have not researched how to install these programs and commands into MiNT. Another way to get the Command Line into MiNT is to install SpareMiNT. SpareMiNT can be found here <http://sparemint.org/sparemint/> and a bit of info here http://wiki.sparemint.org/index.php/Main_Page It has been years since I looked into how to install SpareMiNT into MiNT so I do not recall anything anymore. Lastly I can install EasyMiNT which has FreeMiNT 1.19 Alpha and SpareMiNT that can be installed and configured automatically. There is much more to EasyMiNT. This

is a full blown Operating System Installer that besides installing FreeMiNT and SpareMiNT, has options to install TCP/IP and network, XaAES, Desktop (Currently Thing), Development Enviroment and more. The current version of EasyMiNT is 1.90. It can be found here

<http://atari.st-katharina-apotheke.de/home.php?lang=en&headline=EasyMiNT&text=easymint>

If I remember correctly I started using EasyMint when the project started 15 years ago under the emulator Gemulator

<http://emulators.com/> and not on a real Atari. It worked great back then. Then last year I read about EasyMiNT again and used it to set up my current AranyM setup <http://aranyM.org/> I can't praise EasyMiNT enough on how complete and simple it is to get a fully working FreeMiNT system up and running. I can't guess how long it would take me to download, put together, and configure a similar FreeMiNT setup. In reading the latest updates to EasyMiNT on the web site it states that it was updated for Coldfire (FireBee) support. This was perfect for me as now I don't have to attempt to add Unix capability to FreeMint manually. The EasyMiNT Installer ZIP File is about a 200MB download. I don't recall how big it is unzipped. Once downloaded and unzipped you do need to prepare your hard drive. What is recommended is at least three partitions. A Boot, Unix, and Applications partitions. You can obviously have more but these are the minimum recommended.

I just recently had my original 16GB CF card replaced under Kingston's Warranty as it was defective. So I inserted the new 16GB CF card into my Windows Vista PC that has a built in CF Reader and booted off a CD-ROM from <http://gparted.org/livecd.php/>

The CD I created from this site boots into Linux and you can run GPARTED to partition in my case the CF Card to be used in the FireBee. I partitioned the CF card with the following drives C: 990MB formatted as FAT16 flagged as boot, D: 4GB formatted as EXT2, and E: 10GB formatted as FAT32. I downloaded and unzipped the EasyMiNT 1.90 file to a 1GB SD card. I inserted the SD card and newly prepared CF card into the FireBee and turned the machine on. A majority of the EasyMiNT installer is in German. For me this was not an issue as I have installed EasyMiNT no less than 20 times in the past 6 months under AranyM in trying different configurations. To be able to follow along at first I used Google Translate and typed in phrases I didn't understand to get through the first couple of installs. Now it is second nature and I can install EasyMiNT without assistance. I get to the step where you get a menu asking you all the options to install and configure, I fill all that out and click continue and the installer crashes. I reran the EasyMiNT Installer and it failed at the same point again. I decided to start all over from scratch and repartition and format the CF card. I ran the EasyMiNT installer and it crashed at the same point yet again.

EasyMiNT 1.90 works fine under AranyM as I tried it out before installing it on the FireBee. That's how I found out that there was support for the FireBee. Unfortunately on the FireBee it does not work. I will see if EasyMiNT 1.83 has FireBee support. If it does I will try that version and hope it works. If that does not work then I will have to research how to add some of the Unix capability manually to EasyMiNT. I will let you know how this turns out in a future submission.

FireBee Followup

Short status update with my EasyMiNT 1.90 installation attempts. Since version 1.90 failed to install I tried the EasyMiNT 1.83 installer in AranyM and saw that installation to the FireBee was an install option. When trying it on the FireBee the installer stopped and said that EasyMiNT requires a 680X0 CPU. So in EasyMiNT 1.83 FireBee support was not fully baked in.

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Explaining 'Master Chief's' Arrival on Xbox One!

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Anarcho Ride Trailer - Atari STe Game!

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Halo 5: Guardians Executive Producer Explains Master Chief s Arrival on Xbox One

Halo 4 was the end of the Master Chief and Cortana love story. But the iconic hero supersoldier is coming back in Halo 5: Guardians for his first appearance on the Xbox One.

The game debuts on October 27, and it represents Microsoft's best chance to capitalize on the community of 60 million Halo fans and create a competitive advantage for its Xbox One game console in competition with Sony's PlayStation 4. This time, there's a new conflict between Master Chief and one of his own, agent Locke, who is a kind of rival Spartan.

The title is also a big chance for Microsoft's 343 Industries (the studio created to handle the Halo franchise after original creator Bungie spun out to create another first-person shooter, Destiny) to show what it can do with huge investment of time and money. We played all parts of Halo 5—a preview of the single-player campaign, the esports-like Arena, and the massive Warzone multiplayer mode—and then talked to one of the guardians of the Halo franchise, Josh Holmes, the executive producer for the game.

Holmes talked to us about how 343 is servicing the longtime fans of Halo and how it has honed the story, multiplayer, and cooperative play in the upcoming game. Will the new title be worthy of the Halo name? In the background, we were listening to cheers as multiplayer combat rounds became more intense. Here's an edited transcript of our interview.

GamesBeat: I got to play two of the missions here. I don't quite grasp entirely what the story is getting at. If you're setting this up without really spoiling it for anybody, what sort of preamble do you tell?

Josh Holmes: The story takes place after the events of Halo 4. At this point we have a series of cataclysmic events threatening colonies across the galaxy, mysterious events. The UNSC is trying to figure out what's going on. Early in the story Master Chief goes AWOL for uncertain reasons. This leads the UNSC to deploy a new squad of Spartans to find out why Chief and Blue Team have left the ranks, and what connection—if any—that has to these events.

Gaming is in its golden age, and big and small players alike are maneuvering like kings and queens in A Game of Thrones. Register now for our GamesBeat 2015 event, Oct. 12-Oct.13, where we'll explore strategies in the new world of gaming.

That's the setup. It's told like a mystery, deliberately. The player, as Locke, is following in Chief's footsteps and trying to unravel why he's doing what he's doing and where everything will lead.

GamesBeat: This is why Master Chief and Locke seem to be at odds? They're not on the same mission.

Holmes: They're very different characters. That's intentional. Designing Locke and writing the new character, we wanted him to feel distinct from Chief. We wanted him to be a person who would ask Chief the kind of questions we want him to ask over the course of this mission.

GamesBeat: As far as airtime goes, is it largely about those two? When I think back on Halo 4, a lot of time was spent focused on Chief and Cortana.

Holmes: This is an interesting departure from Halo 4 in that it's an ensemble cast. In Halo 4 we were very focused on those two characters and this intimate relationship they had against a backdrop of action and high-stakes drama. In this game, we still have Chief at the center of it all, but he's now surrounded by a team of Spartans. We have a second team of four that are tracking him. Finding the time to explore all those characters and give each of them a chance to establish themselves was an interesting creative challenge.

GamesBeat: How did Nightfall set up some of this?

Holmes: Nightfall introduces Spartan Locke. At the time, Locke was still an agent of the Office of Naval Intelligence. It's his background before he became a Spartan. It shows viewers the man

he was and who he is at his core before he joined the Spartan program.

As a new Spartan in Halo 5, he's been put at the helm of Fireteam Osiris. They're a brand new squad, which is very different from Chief and Blue Team, who have known each other since childhood. They've fought together and trust each other. They know what each other member of the team is going to do without even thinking about it. They operate on instinct. Locke and Osiris are still finding their groove together, learning about one another and figuring out their places. Locke is still learning what it means to be a leader. That's all fertile ground for the story.

GamesBeat: Playing Blue Team really seems to change the campaign. All of a sudden, the Hunters don't seem so invulnerable anymore.

Holmes: Introducing three more Spartans requires us to rethink the way we build our encounters and design our characters. In the case of the Hunters, they have new behaviors and new attacks they can do in reaction to the way players can surround them. Before, you could trick a Hunter and get behind them and lay waste to them. Now they have the ability to rapidly turn and smash you. It's more challenging to take on those mini-boss characters like the Hunters and the Knights than you'd think.

Halo 5: Guardians

GamesBeat: You've shown more levels and modes from multiplayer. What do you have that's going to surprise returning players?

Holmes: We've gone big with this game in multiplayer. We've built two distinct experiences within the multiplayer suite. Arena is purpose-built for competitive play. It celebrates everything at the core of Halo multiplayer. We have even starts, a level playing field, a variety of game modes that cater to that taste. It's built from the ground up for eSports, but it's there for players of all skill levels.

On the Warzone side, we've tried to bring all the best parts of Halo into one colossal mode. It's multiplayer at a scale that's never been done before in Halo—the size of the maps, the number of players, dozens of AI integrated into the mode. You have AI bosses coming in. The scoring system is very different. You have all these choices as a player. Do I want to try and support my team by taking down bosses? Do I want to go capture bases and score that way, maybe even get a shot at taking out the core in the enemy home base? Or do I just want to contribute by shooting opposing players and whittling them down? There are all these different ways you can contribute in that mode. It never plays the same way twice.

GamesBeat: How do you explain the requisition system since that's brand new to everyone? What should players strategize around?

Holmes: Requisition is a reward system, basically. It supports all of our multiplayer experiences. You earn req packs by playing in Warzone or Arena. There are cosmetic items that carry across both experiences.

For Warzone specifically, all the weapons and vehicles and

power-ups and gameplay-impacting things you can unlock within the req system are limited to Warzone. New players, I hope, will have a great sense of discovery as they open packs and find cool stuff and deploy these cool weapons in Warzone. But there is a lot of strategy there as far as what you deploy, when you deploy it, and how you expend your req energy within each Warzone match. You have this governing system that prevents you from going willy-nilly with any part in your inventory.

GamesBeat: One of the worst things you can do is go in and lose your vehicle to the opposing team.

Holmes: I did that earlier today. I got myself an awesome rocket Hog, took it over to the enemy base, and promptly got sniped. It was disappointing.

GamesBeat: I found that if I got a Warthog, I couldn't count on someone getting in the back to shoot people. I was just driving around.

Holmes: I should have let you guys know ahead of time, but we added a new mechanic in the game where you can rapidly switch from the driver's seat to the gun by pressing jump. You'll swing out of the driver's seat, get on the gun, and start shooting. But it takes a half-second or so. That's what I was doing when they sniped me.

GamesBeat: It seems necessary. Otherwise, it's risky to get in the Warthog and just make yourself a target. Beyond that, do you want to save up for a big item toward the end, something that can tip the balance of power?

Holmes: What I usually do I love vehicles. I'm a big vehicle player. I save up all my req energy for later in the game to bring out something big like a Banshee or Wraith or Scorpion. But plenty of players in the studio focus on power weapons instead. They might bring out several smaller, lower-tier weapons and rack up kills throughout the game. It comes down to how each player likes to play the game.

GamesBeat: Coordination seems to matter a lot.

Holmes: It makes a huge difference. We do play tests at the studio that we call our try hard tests. Both teams are pushing really hard to win, playing very competitively. The team that wins, invariably, is the one with the best communication and collaboration.

Coordinating between 12 players is really tough. But you can coordinate well between three or four players at a time. That's more reflective of what I believe we'll see when the game goes live. Three or four friends will get together and say, Let's take out this boss or Let's push on that base.

GamesBeat: Going back to single-player, I saw that you could take a lot of different paths to get through each level.

Holmes: Absolutely. That's been one of the design pillars for campaign from the beginning, trying to give players more freedom and flexibility in how they approach the combat encounters and

how they navigate the space. All the spaces throughout our campaign have been built around the new suite of Spartan abilities, all the new mobility options. There are plenty of places you can discover and clamber up to or smash through. That adds a lot of replay value. Even for players who only play the campaign once, too, it lets us all have our own story in how we approach each encounter. We can all share those stories with each other, which I think is really powerful.

GamesBeat: Some of the more complex new abilities can be easier to forget. Do you have ways of introducing them so people learn them and use them throughout the campaign?

Holmes: We have tutorial moments early in the campaign at specific points where we teach the new abilities. From there, it's up to players whether they want to keep using them and which ones they take advantage of. The hope is that knowledge then transfers over to multiplayer and people can put the abilities to use in that space.

GamesBeat: If you invest the time to learn those and get good at them, is that going to separate you from players who don't?

Holmes: In multiplayer it makes a big difference, mastering the different abilities. They're designed to work with all of our maps. They can chain together to produce some pretty spectacular results. Just simple things like the thruster ability I was just playing Quinn. I had him dead to rights, but he managed to jump up and thrust over my head and take me out. You can do some things once you start to master those skills that really set you apart.

Halo 5: Guardians

GamesBeat: That seems to [speak] to why Halo 5 is different. You have at least four major iterations here. People could get tired of it. But there are lots of new things for them to master here. It's not going to be the same old multiplayer.

Holmes: We definitely have new skills to master. We've tried to stay true to the core of what Halo is as an experience, tried to continue to expand the universe and the story. It's still very much Halo. It's just evolved. Players have a whole new suite of abilities that they can learn and put to good use.

GamesBeat: What sort of feeling do you hope people will get when they're done with the campaign?

Holmes: I hope they'll be surprised. I hope they enjoy the journey we take them on. It's a different approach to storytelling in Halo, but we're excited about it. We think it's fitting for Halo as we move to Xbox One, to make this big leap in the way we tell stories and let people experience the universe. I hope they come away pleasantly surprised.

GamesBeat: Day one is always a nail-biter for the people who run servers and things like that. Is there anything in the design that you thought about and said, "With tens of millions of people playing this, maybe we shouldn't take the risk of doing this right away?" Just to ensure that the game scales well.

Holmes: Scale is something we think about all the time. We have an in-house services team that's been focused on Halo 5 for the past three years, building the services at the core of the experience. It's the same team that built the services for Halo 4. They're constantly testing for scale and ensuring that all of our services are hardened and ready for the users coming in when we launch.

We've also been able to employ beyond just the beta we did almost a year ago testing resources around the world, doing closed external beta testing. We've put those services under stress and ensured they can stand up to real-world conditions. We're confident going into launch. But obviously it's always a big deal launching a game of this size and scale. For us as developers, the joy comes from seeing people have fun with this thing we've been working on for years and being able to go online and play alongside them.

GamesBeat: Did anything change in your design, though? Are there situations where you don't want to push a particular idea as far as you could because it won't work with 10 million people playing at once?

Holmes: We always take that into account in the design process, the technical requirements and scale requirements that go into the experience. We've been lucky to partner closely with the platform team, the Xbox team, in building this experience. Being able to take advantage of things like Xbox Live cloud compute. It's been a real shift for us technologically as we rewrite our engine for Xbox One and move our online experience to dedicated servers and take advantage of cloud compute. That's taken a lot of investment from us and a lot of work in concert with the Xbox team. But yeah, our designs have all been built with an understanding of what's possible.

GamesBeat: What are some instances where you can use cloud compute?

Holmes: Warzone is a great example. We have dozens of AI active on the map simulating, making decisions, reacting to players. AI bosses are coming to the map. We have large environments and large player counts and lots of vehicles. We can do that all at once because we can use cloud compute to simulate things like physics and AI, augmenting the power of the console itself.

GamesBeat: Do you feel like you've pushed the console to the edge of its capability yet?

Holmes: I wouldn't say that. As developers, we're constantly learning on any platform. We're still early in the cycle for Xbox One. This is only the first title we've built from the ground up for Xbox One. We're pushing the console pretty hard, but I'm sure that as we continue to develop for the console, we'll learn more. That's the way with every console generation.

'Rise of the Tomb Raider' Is More of the Same, and That's Okay

Crystal Dynamics' 2013 Tomb Raider reboot pulled off a tough task: It successfully brought life back to an aging, muddled franchise and provided heroine Lara Croft with an excellent origin story. Now that Croft has made her transition from a terrified shipwreck survivor to adventuring (but still vulnerable) badass, what does she do for an encore? Rise of the Tomb Raider (coming to the Xbox One and 360 as a timed exclusive on November 10th) answers that by tightening up and refining the first game's core experience while throwing players into an entirely new environment. The world is bigger, there are more skills to improve, more secrets to find and, yes, more tombs to raid. It isn't wildly different than the last game, but that's not a knock: If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

It's easy for players to jump right in whether they're familiar with the previous game or not; the controls remain mostly intuitive and the story stands up well on its own. It's a story that's a bit of a cliché: Croft is continuing her father's research into reincarnation and "tangible evidence of the immortal soul." The search for immortality is hardly new, but fortunately the ensuing fight for survival and world exploration aren't dulled by the reason behind Lara's mission.

While the first game did a great job of presenting a lush, detailed island of terror, developer Crystal Dynamics is really harnessing the next-generation power of the Xbox One to craft a massive and beautiful world to explore - and one that puts you in the kinds of environments not typically associated with Lara Croft. Creative director Noah Hughes says that focusing on "virtual tourism" is always a part of location design in Tomb Raider games. "You go to these exotic destinations and feel like you've been there on some level," Hughes said. "That leads to a natural focusing on environment as part of the concepting phase, thinking 'where are the cool places we can take her' that are ultimately different than we've been in the past."

A good chunk of the game's first hour flashes back two weeks and takes you out of Siberia to a more "standard" Tomb Raider environment (the sun-baked deserts of Syria). But the majority of what I played put me in a vast, frozen wasteland where the weather feels as much of a threat as the enemies stalking you. But despite the consistent, snow-covered aesthetic, the details of each location continue to be quite varied - Hughes noted that they focused on making sure each location had a wide diversity of terrain to keep any one environment from getting stale.

The remastered version of Tomb Raider that hit the PS4 and Xbox One last year should give you a good idea of what to expect visually, but Rise of the Tomb Raider improves on even that title in some pretty significant ways. For starters, it's not just the landscapes that are rendered so dramatically: Character facial expressions, movements and hair are all rendered in far more detail than in the previous game. They're safely far away from the dreaded Uncanny Valley here, and it's not just in the cutscenes - everything looks great throughout, whether or not you're in a pre-rendered storytelling scene.

The Xbox One's extra horsepower also allowed Crystal Dynamics

to build areas that are much larger and more in-depth than anything the team was able to do in the first game. In fact, Hughes says the game's hub areas are two to three times larger than in the previous game. You'll be able to spend plenty of time getting lost in the world, searching for the many collectible artifacts spread throughout that fill in the game's back story.

The biggest gameplay change I noticed was to the crafting system for upgrading weapons. You can still find the generic salvage around the world, but some puzzles will require you to scour the environment for specific materials you'll need to survive. At one point in the demo, I was confronted with an enormous grizzly bear that mauled me to pieces when I tried to get around it. The game helpfully informed me that poison might be a way to get around the beast, and so I was sent off to search the snowy forest for mushrooms and other supplies I could use to craft a poison arrow - something that made felling the bear much easier. Fortunately, the requirements for crafting these special items weren't too onerous; I never felt like I was being forced into unnecessarily long fetch quests to pad the game's running time.

Rise of the Tomb Raider strikes a nice balance between driving the story forward and allowing players the time to explore areas for secret items as well as the titular tombs players felt were missing a bit from the first game. There are definitely more side quests, and the ones I tried felt a lot more challenging than the ones in the first Tomb Raider. In fact, a few ended up being too time-consuming. I moved on to keep the story going because of my limited demo time - but if I were playing at my own pace, I would have been happy to spend more time exploring.

In the end, this is a Tomb Raider game, through and through. Rise may not break any new ground for the series, but the 2013 reboot successfully reinvented the game's formula well enough that I'm not at all disappointed to have another chapter to enjoy. There's more to explore, the world and its inhabitants looks better, and the frozen, desolate old-world Russian landscape is a huge departure from the previous game. All of which is to say that Rise of the Tomb Raider could be the best kind of sequel: One that delivers even more of what people loved about the original.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online      -      Online Users Growl & Purr!
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Anarcho Ride Trailer - Atari STe Game

Atari STe emulated with STEEM SSE. Running on original 8mhz
system speed. Written in GFA Basic.
With graphics by Alan Garrison Tomkins.

Music by xFalcon (very likely this is not the final game
Music)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMUYydbv86Y>

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Big Names Defend Net Neutrality

About 30 Democratic lawmakers submitted arguments that a plain reading of communications law grants the Federal Communications Commission the authority to adopt the rules. Other defenders included The Internet Association, Engine, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Tim Wu, who coined the term "net neutrality," the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries and others.

"In sum, the FCC has done precisely what Congress intended the Commission to do classify broadband Internet access service according to its best understanding of the technology of the day, and how consumers use that technology," the lawmakers argue in the brief, led by Democrats, Sen. Ed Markey (Conn.) and Rep. Anna Eshoo (Calif.).

Monday was the deadline for supporters of the Federal Communications Commission's Internet rules to file their friend of the court briefs, defending the regulations from a lawsuit brought by Internet service providers. Oral arguments are scheduled for December.

British Government's 'Karma Police' Surveillance Program
Tracks Your Internet Browsing Habits

Britain's Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) launched a mass surveillance program to track every Internet user's web browsing habits worldwide.

Karma Police is more than just a classic Radiohead song it s apparently the code name of a British government web surveillance program.

Britain's Government Communications Headquarters has been running a cybersecurity program that was created seven years ago to track the browsing habits of people around the world, according to Edward Snowden's documents published by the Intercept.

The mass surveillance operation was started between 2007 and 2008, so if you were surfing the web for porn, signed up for a social media account or read an article from an online news publication around that time, chances are the British government has seen what you've been doing.

The operation has collected more than 1.1 trillion metadata records between August 2007 and March 2009, increasing to 50 billion per day by 2012, according to the Intercept.

The existence of "Karma Police" was unearthed by whistleblower Edward Snowden, who made global headlines after leaking classified information that shed light on the National Security Agency's surveillance practices.

The origin of the codename for GCHQ's program was not found in the newly released documents.

But plans for "Karma Police" were laid out to help give the agency "either (a) a web browsing profile for every visible user on the Internet, or (b) a user profile for every visible website on the Internet," the Intercept reported.

The program was initially used to find intelligence on people who listen to online radio shows - collecting over 7 million metadata records within three months.

GCHQ closely scrutinized radio stations that would broadcast recitations from the Quran.

US Senator Blocks Proposed Surveillance Law Opposed by Facebook and Google

The US Senate Intelligence Committee has dropped proposed language in legislation that would require social media companies to report any "terrorist activity" to government authorities.

The controversial measure was included in the 2016 Intelligence Authorization Act, which annually updates the legal authority of the US's 16 intelligence agencies, The Hill reports.

But steady lobbying pressure from big internet companies and civil liberties groups, and the steadfast resistance of one US senator, forced the committee's leadership to withdraw the language.

Back in July, Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon placed a "hold" on the intelligence bill due to what he called the "overly vague and dangerous provision," known as Section 603.

Any US senator can place a hold on legislation and prevent it from coming to a vote - Wyden used that authority to block the intelligence bill for 56 days.

On Monday this week, Wyden announced that the Section 603 provision on terrorist activity was removed from the bill, which

he called a victory for free speech.

Social media companies aren't qualified to determine what communications should be interpreted as terrorist activity, Wyden said:

Social media companies aren't qualified to judge which posts amount to "terrorist activity," and they shouldn't be forced against their will to create a Facebook Bureau of Investigations to police their users' speech.

The tech companies applying pressure to remove the provision included the Internet Association, with members including internet giants Google, Facebook, Twitter, Yahoo, Snapchat, Amazon, Reddit and dozens of others.

Those companies strongly objected to the provision in a 5th August letter to the Senate Intelligence Committee.

The association derided Section 603 for potentially "chilling free speech" and the enormous burden it would place on internet companies to seek out any speech or deeds that could be connected to terrorism.

Backing up the tech companies, the Center for Democracy and Technology (CD&T) objected to turning social media companies into de facto spies for the US government.

In its own letter to the intelligence committee, the CD&T - a coalition of human rights and civil liberties organizations - said the proposed law would encourage social media companies to "over-report" the activities of innocent people.

Section 603 did not include any safeguards against abuse, CD&T said:

Unfortunately, this provision would create strong incentives for providers to over-report on the activity and communications of their users, in order to avoid violating the law. This provision risks bringing wholly innocent people under the scrutiny of the US government in a procedure that includes no limits on the use of the reported information and no safeguards against abuse.

Senator Dianne Feinstein, the top-ranking Democrat on the intelligence committee and a supporter of Section 603, previously said it was modeled off existing law requiring tech companies to report child abuse imagery to the government.

However, the tech companies didn't buy that argument because, they said, finding and reporting child abuse imagery is "fundamentally different" from finding and reporting terrorist activity:

The proposed reporting obligation is fundamentally different to existing mandatory reporting obligations for child sexual abuse imagery in US law, which concern content that is per se unlawful, generally easy to detect, and is never constitutionally protected speech.

Social media companies do have policies in place for taking down extremist, hateful or violent content, sometimes at the request of law enforcement.

Yet some lawmakers and intelligence officials in both the US and UK say that's not enough.

Andrew Parker, head of the UK's MI5 security service, recently criticized social media companies for not proactively approaching the government with information on suspected terrorist activities.

The tussle over Section 603 comes at a time when technology companies are also fighting off law enforcement demands for backdoors allowing them to read encrypted messages of criminal suspects.

FBI Director James Comey has highlighted the use of encryption by terrorist groups, and has argued that technology companies' use of encryption impedes law enforcement investigations.

UK lawmakers are considering a contentious piece of legislation, known as the "snooper's charter," which could force internet companies to give the government backdoor access to terrorists' communications.

Removal of Section 603 from the intelligence bill indicates that Silicon Valley's clout in Congress may help it win the so-called crypto-wars in the US, but it remains to be seen whether those tech companies have the same influence abroad.

Nasty URL Bug Brings Google Chrome to a Screeching Halt

If you use Google Chrome, you'll want to watch out for this bug: According to VentureBeat, a specific character string of text could bring your browser crashing to the ground.

According to VentureBeat, merely appending `%%30%30` to the end of a URL will cause Chrome to hang and crash. The cruelest twist? You don't even have to open a malformed URL to cause the crash—merely mousing over the link is enough to bring down Chrome. (In other words, don't add the above string to URLs unless you like cussing at your computer. Don't say we didn't warn you.)

Security researcher Andris Atteka originally discovered the bug by entering a URL with the added characters tacked on (a total of 26 characters), but VentureBeat noted that it takes even fewer characters—only 16 in total—to crash the browser.

Atteka says this is only a DOS vulnerability—that is, a crash-causing bug—so it isn't a security flaw in the truest sense of the word. Still, this bug has the potential to be quite a nuisance since you'll lose all your open browser tabs and windows.

The bug affects current versions of Chrome as of this writing,

and will crash both Windows and OS X versions of the browser. While you probably won't come across it in the wild, Google has yet to release a patch for this bug, so be careful out there.

Google Just Introduced A New 'Block' Button to Gmail

Google just answered many email-users' prayers by launching a new "block" button.

"Sometimes you get mail from someone who's really disruptive. Hopefully it doesn't happen often but when it does, you should be able to say, 'Never see messages from this person again,'" the company writes in its blog post on the news.

Any emails from addresses that you choose to block will now automatically go into your spam folder. See ya later, trolls.

Gmail's also introducing its "unsubscribe" button to its Android app.

Although you could unsubscribe to emails on your web-based Gmail account, Android users can now do it from their apps.

Google's Gmail Finally Adds the Ability To Block Email, But There's A Better Way

Google said Tuesday that users will now be able to block specific email addresses except that they're not really blocked, and Google already has more powerful tools to eradicate offensive email that are already in Gmail.

As of Tuesday, blocking an email will actually send an email from that specific email address to the spam folder where it will technically live on, even if no one really checks their spam folder.

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Technically, neither Gmail nor Yahoo Mail offer a block option, in which a hateful email is simply never received. Microsoft's Outlook app for Office allows you to Junk an email either from the specific sender or the sender's domain something that Google's Gmail doesn't allow.

Why this matters: If you whack a spider and miss, and then it crawls under your bed well, that's going to creep some people out. Ditto for your psycho ex-: some people don't want to even see an email (and its header) in their inbox. Blocking that email is one solution; totally eradicating it via a delete filter may appeal to others. How do you do the latter? Read on. How to set up an automated filter to delete unwanted email in Gmail

Gmail does allow users to set up an automated filter to take email from specific senders and apply various rules to it,

including deleting it. Here s how to do it:

In your inbox, select one or more messages using the little checkboxes to the left of the message. At the top of the list of messages, you ll see a number of icons with drop-down menus. Click More . > Filter messages like these.

That will open up a screen, pre-populated with the email addresses of the senders of the emails you highlighted. Note that you can also add specific words in the fields the subject line, and more, if you want to fine-tune this further.

Where this gets confusing and this is possibly the reason for the new Block command is that clicking Create filter with this search does not actually create the filter.

Instead, it takes you to a second page, where you have a number of options to apply to the message. The one you ll want, in this case, is Delete. Granted, deleting an email means that it s gone forever. But if you re desperate to never hear from a particular email address ever again, you ve found a possible solution.

Use this filter to automatically delete an email in Gmail.

There s another twist: The Block feature will be added to the Gmail Android app next week. You can only dial up the Gmail filters we ve shown you above, however, on the desktop version of Gmail. Block may become a weapon of last resort if you don t own a PC.

Fortunately, there s a kinder, gentler option to those automated mailing lists that you wanted to see, once, and never want to see again. The Gmail Unsubscribe function is also coming to the Android app. That allows you to both issue an automated unsubscribe command, as well as hide that spammy list from your inbox, Google said.

Deleting WhatsApp Messages Before 90 Days Could Land you in Jail

While the Indian people continue to struggle for Net Neutrality, a new problem surrounded them with the release of the latest policy for National Encryption Policy by the Indian Government.

If you delete your WhatsApp Messages or Emails that you receive or send before 90 days, it might be a crime and you can End-up In Jail.

If the new National Encryption Policy implements that come up with weird suggestions one should not delete WhatsApp onversation, Gmail or any email for 90 days, it would be an Internet Disaster.

With the aim to provide confidentiality of information and ensure protection of sensitive or proprietary information , the draft policy, proposed by an so-called expert panel from the Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY),

requires:

The government wants to have access to all your encrypted information including your personal emails, text and voice messages, and data stored in a private business server.

The Policy will enforce Internet users to save all encrypted communication data in plaintext for at least 90 days, which includes: WhatsApp messages, emails, sensitive banking or e-commerce transactions details.

National Encryption Policy also want Indian Internet Users to give up their encryption keys to the Government and Security Agencies.

In India, More than 80% of Internet users are addicted to Non-Indian services like WhatsApp, Facebook, Gmail, Skype, Telegram and thousands more.

But, the National Encryption Policy requires Service Providers located outside India to enter into an agreement with the Indian Government, which says:

Encryption algorithms and key sizes will be prescribed by the Government, the policy reads.

The draft National Encryption policy has triggered national outrage among citizens of India that are forced to store their online messages send through WhatsApp, SMS, e-mail or any such service for up to 90 days.

Now Let s see what the government decides.

Firefox's New IM, Privacy Features Are Worth A Look

There's a lot going on with Firefox. Two new versions of the browser debuted in just two days; one's ready to go, and the other, more interesting one is still in beta.

The finished version, Firefox 41, offers a number of tweaks, but its main claim to fame is an enhanced instant messaging (IM) feature. Firefox 42 is all about making it harder for sites to track people who visit them.

One of the best things about the Mozilla Foundation, and its Firefox browser, is the "openness;" the beta version is open to anyone who cares to tinker with it, as long as they understand that it may have some rough edges.

I tried both new versions on Windows 7 and Windows 10 and didn't notice any significant problems. I've used Firefox as my main browser for years, and although it's not as popular among Web surfers as it once was, it gets the job done without unnecessary drama. If you already use Firefox, I see no reason not to upgrade to Firefox 41. Ordinarily, I don't encourage people to use beta products, but my experience with Firefox 42 has been smooth so far. It's worth a download, but keep in mind that

issues certainly could arise, and Mozilla might add or delete certain features.

A while back, Mozilla built a new video communications feature it called "Hello." Firefox users can now use Hello to send and receive IMs during video calls in the browser on Windows, Mac and Linux. The people on the other end of those calls or chats do not have to use Hello. You can simply send an invitation from Firefox to the recipient via email, and if he or she is using Chrome, Opera or Firefox and chooses to accept, you're connected. Unfortunately, the feature only currently works in the desktop version of Firefox.

The release also includes updates that let users personalize their Firefox accounts with photos, and sync seems to work a bit better, so it's easier to share browsing data, such as passwords, bookmarks, and history, across your various devices.

The private modes in most of today's browsers purposefully don't save your history. Firefox 42 takes private browsing a step further. From Mozilla:

"The experimental Private Browsing enhancements ready for testing today actively block website elements that could be used to record user behavior across sites. This includes elements like content, analytics, social and other services that might be collecting data without your knowledge."

The feature also blocks some ads, but that's not its primary purpose. If ads don't contain trackers, Firefox 42 will load them.

The new private browsing mode also has a "Control Center" that provides quick access to all of Firefox's security and privacy controls. It's a notable enhancement, because it makes it easier for users to take advantage of the safeguards. And because some websites won't load if you disable tracking, Mozilla added a button to the toolbar that lets you turn off the no-tracking feature for individual sites.

Three-fifths of the World Is Still Without Internet

Most of us like to complain about slow Wi-Fi connections or too many popup ads on websites. But billions of people around the world wish they had these problems.

A new report from the United Nations' Broadband Commission found that a whopping 57 percent of the world or a total of 4.2 billion people don't have regular access to the Internet.

Access is worst in least developing countries (LDCs), where only one in 10 people is online, the report found. A gender divide is also "proving incredibly difficult to overcome, reflecting broader social gender inequalities."

"The digital divide is proving stubbornly persistent in terms of access to broadband Internet, including the challenge of

extending last-mile access to infrastructure to remote and rural communities," according to the report.

The report comes as a growing number of tech companies, led by Facebook and Google, are trying to come up with ways to connect the world. Facebook, for example, wants to use solar-powered drones to connect 4 billion people across the world on the Internet. SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk also said he wants to deploy an array of small satellites to deliver low cost Internet access around the world.

The report called on countries to adopt "effective policies and strategies to make broadband available, affordable and accessible, as a vital enabler of sustainable development in modern-day knowledge societies." It also called for all countries to draw up a National Broadband plan, which can "play an especially important role in coordinating public and private sector actions and in prioritizing and promoting national broadband development."

Currently only 148 countries have such a plan.

"It is increasingly vital to extend access to digital education services, new capabilities, culture, entertainment, healthcare, financial and commercial services, along with training and education," according to the report. "An 'information revolution' is needed to help inform and improve policy-making. Public and private sectors must work together in close partnership to achieve broadband for all."

Despite the gaps in access, the report found that telecoms in much of the world are on the rise.

Citing data from the consultancy IDC, the report found that the total telecom sector was worth \$1.67 trillion in 2013, growing by 1 to 2 percent per year, driven mainly by expansion in China and emerging markets. Global IT and telecom spending is expected to grow by 3.8 percent to around \$3.8 trillion for 2015 alone.

The mobile sector has also shown strong growth, with the International Telecommunications Union projecting that the number of mobile phone subscriptions by the end of the year will soon rival the global population, reaching upwards of 7.1 billion.

According to Ovum, which analyzes the telecom, mobile and media markets, mobile cellular subscriptions will grow to 8.5 billion by 2019, of which 6.5 billion will be mobile broadband subscriptions.

The research firm Infonetics also estimates that mobile data services including text messaging and mobile broadband rose across the board in every region in 2014, thanks to the growing use of smartphones.

But the report said that growth has been inconsistent, noting that European mobile operators have seen a decline in revenues for the past several years.

This Computer Chip Self-Destructs in 10 Seconds (On Command) To Keep Secrets Safe

The Secret Messages are often designed to be destroyed without a trace.

In Spy thriller movie Mission Impossible , every time Tom Cruise receives a secret message, the last words state - This Tape message will self-destruct in 5 seconds ...and BOOM!

There s a sudden explosion, and smoke comes out of the device; containing sensitive information few seconds ago.

This Self-destructing thing has become a reality now.

Palo Alto Research Center Incorporated (PARC) a Xerox company, involved in R&D in IT and hardware has under Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency s (DARPA'S) Vanishing Programmable Resources (VAPR) achieved success in developing Self-Destructing computer chips capable of destruction in 10 seconds.

The phenomenon is quite familiar .isn t it?

Now, with DARPA s initiative this is soon going to become a reality intended mainly for the military personnel. With the idea of - Protection of data that once existed.

PARC showcased this breathtaking technology at the Wait, What? event of DARPA in St. Louis Thursday, as part of the agency s VAPR project.

The early model build of the Integrated Circuit (IC) by PARC focuses on mainly two technologies namely:

- Transient technology

- DUST (Disintegration Upon Stress-Release Trigger) technology

The data stored in these chips may be encrypted data or a secret message intended for an authenticated person.

The chip designed on a Gorilla Glass substrate is capable of shattering on demand into millions of pieces which cannot be reconstructed. The same glass that is being used as a protective cover for the smartphones.

We take the glass and we ion-exchange temper it to build in stress, said Gregory Whiting, a senior scientist at PARC. What you get is glass that, because it s heavily stressed, breaks it fragments into tiny little pieces.

The team of security researchers from PARC in the demonstration in St. Louis showed (See link below) how a laser light activated self-destructing circuit, also the activator could be an RF signal or a physical switch.

Vanishing electronic devices can be used to address military security, data privacy, and environmental science,

says PARC.

DARPA awarded PARC with \$2,128,834 amount of money as the contract award for the research under their VAPR program.

This discovery will prove to be of greater importance as, in military operations a piece of sensitive information is marked i.e. an authorized person shall only be able to access the information.

For this many authentication methods and procedures are being utilized by the military but somewhere or the other they are prone to get either stolen or victims of the cyber attack as seen in the current scenario.

The self-destructing chips leave no evidence for the data to be restructured.

This is not the first time such chips have been developed, DARPA has earlier awarded IBM with \$3,455,473 in December 2014 for Developing and establishing a basis set of materials, components, integration, and manufacturing capabilities to undergird this new class of electronics .

At that time, IBM stated different use of materials and engineering to build the Self-destructing chips. Well, now let s wait for their proposed idea to become a reality soon.

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